

FITCHBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
January 13, 2016

FITCHBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY
610 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA

Trustees present were: Chair: Jonah McKenna Moss, Chris Benoit, Kim Cochrane, Robert Favini, Mary Rice Hurley, Michael Phaneuf and Jim Walsh. Others present were Library Director Sharon Bernard, Asst. Library Director Jean Tenander and guest Linda Mack from the North Worcester County Community Foundation.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Chair McKenna suggested moving the discussion with Linda Mack from Old Business to the beginning of the meeting. Ms. Mack was at the meeting by invitation to discuss the possibility of setting up an endowment fund for the library administered through the Community Foundation. If the initial contribution to a fund set up through the CF is at least \$10,000.00 the CF will add \$5,000.00 to the amount. Using the CF also eliminates the necessity of the Library filing a 501C3. Working with the CF would allow the Trustees to avail themselves of the CF's expertise as they work to raise money for a new or re-designed library.

The Trustees voted to ask the Friends to open a \$10,000.00 Fitchburg Public Library endowment fund with the Community Foundation.

REVIEW OF THE MINUTES FROM December 9, 2015.

The minutes of the December 9 meeting were accepted.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair McKenna said the Trustees had to vote to give permission for Fitchburg Public Library to participate in a pajama drive. The pajama drive is sponsored by the Boston Bruins and the group Cradle to Crayons and its purpose is to collect as many new warm pajamas for children as possible within a specific time frame. The Trustees voted to allow the Library to be a collection point. The collection ends on March 15.

Chair McKenna said he had received a list of recommendations of the State Aid Review Committee from the MBLC which the MBLC wishes all libraries to vote on and return the results to them. The recommendations relate to the content of and manner in which libraries report the required information to the MBLC on their state aid request reports. Dir. Bernard distributed copies of the recommendations and the Trustees voted on the recommendations. The question in each case was whether the recommendation would be of benefit, harm or make no difference to libraries.

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

Director Bernard reported she would be having a meeting with the Mayor on January 14 to discuss the creation of a building committee and other library concerns. She said there was no specific number required but was thinking about 5 or 7 members. She said the chair should not be a trustee. The members do not have to reside in Fitchburg.

Director Bernard said she would like to be able to keep the new parking lot. If the city hall moves to a different location they will no longer need parking in this area so that would be in our favor. She hoped to discuss this with the mayor.

She reported she had submitted the Building Program to the MBLC and they had returned it with a few suggested areas where it could be clarified. She does not believe these changes would require a vote by the trustees.

Director Bernard said it was time to write a new Strategic Plan for the Library. It is a requirement of the MBLC that one be submitted every 3 years. She said it could be described as directions to the director so she knows and can share the overall goals of the library with the staff. A committee has to be set up which includes trustees as well as outsiders. Ms. Bernard said the major job of the trustees was to listen and hear what the public seeks in their library. She said the MLS can be of great assistance in compiling such a plan. It is also possible to hire an outside consultant.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee- The monthly financial report was distributed.

Legislative Affairs Committee- There was no report.

OLD BUSINESS

Trustees voted to allow petitions in the library provided they complied with our stated policy.

Chair McKenna said he would like the Trustees to consider asking Dir. Bernard to ask the mayor to replace Naldi Lopez as a Trustee. He said Mr. Lopez had missed 3 meetings in a row. Per the By-laws the Trustees are able to vote to seek a replacement. Dir. Bernard said she never received notifications from him of his intended absences. The Trustees voted to replace Mr. Lopez. Chair McKenna will notify him of their decision.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Submitted by Jean Tenander
Reviewed by Jim Walsh

Good afternoon and Happy New Year!

February is just around the corner and with it comes the annual Cradles to Crayons/Boston Bruins PJ Drive. It runs February 1st through March 15, 2016. This year's goal is to collect over 6,750 new pajamas to keep children feeling warm, safe, ready-to-learn and valued.

Last year libraries made a huge difference. Our libraries represented 58 of the 93 participating organizations and collected more than 3,100 of the 6,100 total pairs of pajamas—and that was with record snowstorms!

Most organizations that participate in the PJ Drive have to transport their donations to the Cradles to Crayons office in Brighton. But not libraries! Thanks to the Massachusetts Library System (MLS), libraries can send their PJ's through MLS delivery to the Massachusetts Board of Commissioners (MBLC).

We hope your library will participate this year. To help you have an awesome PJ Drive we have put together the PJ Drive Toolkit and some helpful information on the MBLC Newsroom. We've also put together a Bruins Winter Kit with fun crafts, coloring sheets and more.

State Aid Review - 2015 2016
Fitchburg Public Library

Recommendations to the Board: Please lock and submit your survey by January 23, 2016. (Click "more" for additional information)

State Aid Review - 2015

The Board of Library Commissioners accepted the recommendations of the State Aid Review Committee at their October 1, 2015. During the month of October, input was requested from the libraries around the Commonwealth through a series of meetings and an online form.

Input was mixed for all but the recommendation on Hours. MBLC Staff are asking that each library vote as to whether the 5 remaining recommendations would benefit, harm, or make no difference to their library.

Please complete the survey and lock it by January 23, 2016. The results of all the feedback will be presented to the Board at the February 4, 2016 meeting.

Contact Liz Babbitt (liz.babbitt@state.ma.us) or Mary Rose Quinn (maryrose.quinn@state.ma.us) if you have questions.

Materials Expenditures

5.2.1 Include part of the cost of upgrading computer hardware as a material expenditure. (Click to read definition)	<i>benefit</i>
5.2.2 Materials Expenditure based only on the items most Libraries have in common. (Click to read definition)	<i>no difference</i>

Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR)

5.3.1 The MAR calculation = 3 year average of TAMI + 2.5% (Click to read definition)	<i>benefit</i>
5.3.2 The MAR no longer includes Municipally Appropriated Revolving Funds (Click to read definition)	<i>benefit</i>
5.3.3 Recalculate the MAR to adjust for staff changes impacting salaries (Click to read definition)	<i>no difference</i>

Comments

Additional Comments	
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5.2.1 Include part of the cost of upgrading computer hardware as a material expenditure.

In order to keep up with the latest resources for patrons, committee members felt it was important for libraries to update public access computers on a regular basis. Permitting libraries to count a percentage (to be determined) of the cost of providing technology for direct use by patrons as a Material Expenditure would be allowable.

Clarifications:

- In any fiscal year, a library (system) would be able to count an amount spent on computer hardware that is directly available to patrons.
- The amount allowable would be up to 20% of the library's Materials Expenditures Requirement for that year.
- Libraries are not obligated to include hardware as part of their Materials Expenditure.
- Money used must come from the Library's Total OPERATING Income or Paid on Behalf of the Library by Friends or Foundations.
- Hardware includes hard drives, monitors, and laptops for public access in the library. NOTE: Hardware that circulates already counts towards the Materials Expenditure Requirement.

Pros:

- Some libraries must forego updating hardware since they have to choose between materials and computers. This would give some flexibility to those libraries.
- Keeping hardware up to date allows for better patron access to resources bought with the Materials Expenditure money.

Cons:

- Dilutes the materials requirement and reduces money available to purchase print and electronic resources.
- Reduces the incentive for towns to fund materials adequately since they can push a portion of technology into the requirement.

5.2.2 Materials Expenditure based only on the items most Libraries have in common.

Library budgets vary greatly in what the line items the municipality includes. In order to determine a more equitable arrangement, the Materials Expenditure Requirement should be based on only those budget items that most libraries have in common such as materials, and salaries and wages.

Clarifications:

- Salaries and wages must be part of the Library appropriation, not paid by another town department.
- Currently, for libraries where benefits are part of the TAMI, the benefits are excluded from the calculation.

Pros:

- Some library budgets include utilities, network fees, benefits, etc. This would reduce the need for these libraries to spend at a higher level than libraries where these items are paid by the town budget.
- Some networks base their annual fee on the Materials Expenditure line. This change would benefit libraries paying a higher network fee.

Cons:

- This reduces the number of line items used to calculate the Materials Expenditure Requirement which in turn would decrease the amount spent on library collections.
- A decrease in the Materials Expenditures line would affect most libraries in the State Aid to Public Libraries program and would immediately impact locally available resources, and resources shared statewide over time.

5.3.1 The MAR calculation = 3 year average of TAMI + 2.5%

The Administrative Policy for calculating the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) would be retired and the MAR would be calculated solely according the MGL, c.78, s.19A:

No city or town shall receive any money under this section in any year when the appropriation of said city or town for free public library services is below an amount equal to the average of its appropriation for free public library service for the three years immediately preceding, increased by two and one-half per cent of said average.

For example, FY2017 MAR= (FY2016 municipal appropriation + FY2015 municipal appropriation + FY2014 municipal appropriation) / 3, plus 2.5%.

Clarification:

- This recommendation would only affect municipalities where the TAMI is below the MAR. If a municipality meets or exceeds the MAR, this is currently the way next year's MAR is calculated.
- For those towns where the MAR is below the TAMI, this would act as a one-time recalculation of the MAR.
- Changing to this formula would still require an increase of 2.5% over the average of the last 3 years appropriations.

Pros:

- Many libraries that have received waivers for a long time due to a large budget cut during the recent economic downturn would a downward adjustment of the MAR.
- Libraries that meet the MAR each year would see no change in their requirement.

Cons:

- A municipality may have no incentive to try to bring the library back to its previous funding level. This may encourage a downward slide in library funding.

5.3.2 The MAR no longer includes Municipally Appropriated Revolving Funds

It was suggested that municipally appropriated revolving fund accounts be eliminated from the MAR and the current MAR for those municipalities that use revolving fund accounts as part of their municipal appropriation be re-calculated.

Clarifications:

- The revolving fund would no longer be included in the MAR calculation. This is a no loss equation as the MAR would be re-calculated to reflect this change.
- Municipally Appropriated Revolving Funds would still be reported on the Financial.

Pros:

- The MAR is calculated on actual money not projections that may or may not be collected by the library.
- Municipalities can no longer meet the MAR by appropriating unrealistic revolving fund amounts.

No Cons were observed

5.3.3 Recalculate the MAR to adjust for staff changes impacting salaries

When long-time staff retire, a library may see a drop in its personnel line. It has been suggested that the MAR be re-calculated to reflect this. (This is a common occurrence when a municipality starts paying utilities from a central budget and the library budget drops accordingly.)

Pro:

- A library would not require a waiver of the MAR due to a change in.
- Libraries may be seen as fiscally responsible partners by the municipality

Con:

- Municipalities may take advantage of this. Long-time, well-paid staff could be targeted for dismissal during tight economic times and replaced by lower paid applicants.
- This would result in a loss of library funding. It would benefit the library to the money in their appropriation and use it to add FTE or a pool of substitute staff.
- Often libraries need to pay for interim staff so no real savings would be accrued.



Strategic Planning for Libraries

What it is and why it is so important

What is a strategic plan?

- Living Document
- Management tool for organization
- Blueprint for service enhancements over the next 3-5 years
- Sets the course for the future based on where a library has been, where it is going and what strategies will be used to meet those future trends, needs & wants of the library user
- Answers the question: *What is the role of the library in the community(whether it is a town, school, academic environment, corporate structure) ?*

Why does a library need a strategic plan?

- Helps library gain recognition, funding & staffing for accomplishing the goals and objectives set out in the plan
- Explains programs to others
- Identifies priorities, strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results
- Develops budget related to the plan
- Provides goals, objectives and actions for future development
- Gives a clear sense of purpose
- Provides opportunity for evaluation and assessment

Parts of the Strategic Plan

- Assessment of Users Needs and Wants (Library users & non-users)
- Mission Statement
- Vision/Value Statements
- Strategic Directions/ Goals
- Multi-year Objectives
- Actions/Activities with timeframes
- Outcomes
- Methodology (what did you do to bring this plan together)
- Technology should be incorporated in your plan (or developed as a separate plan)

How do you start?

- Include/Invite Library Board, staff and community members to be part of the process*
- Library Director prepares demographic information, library statistics, programs and services currently offered, and trends of libraries today
- S.O.A.R. (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) analysis
- Brainstorming session –what does the community want and need?
- Community Goals and Vision Exercise
- Community Input/Feedback (survey, focus groups, target audience input)
- Prioritize needs and wants from input and feedback

- Develop goals/objectives/actions
- Communicate plan

Key Elements:

- Input
- Where is the library going and why?
- What will be accomplished by the plan?
- How will it be done?
- Feedback from community

Advantages of a Strategic Plan

- Contract between: Board/Director – Director/Staff – Users/Library – Funders/Library
- Accountability
- Transparency = Trust
- Creates transformation/ change
- Everyone is part of the plan (buy-in)
- Prioritizing makes hard choices easier
- Resource allocation

Strategic Directions can include:

- Collections
- Environments
- Marketing
- Services
- Staff
- Resources
- Facilities
- Advocacy
- Communication
- Customer Service
- Staff Development

Strategic Plans create a plan to better serve the citizens of the community and guarantee them free public library services of the highest caliber.

Strategic Plans cannot be done in a bubble – they must be inclusive.

To see more about planning, go to the MLS Resource Guide on Strategic Planning found at:

<http://guides.masslibsystem.org/strategicplanning>

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* The Planning Committee will vary depending on the type of library. In an academic environment the members could include students, faculty liaisons, library staff, student workers, someone from admissions, administration. In some cases, the library staff/faculty is the committee and plans the process for getting assessment and input in other ways already provided through the college process (NEASC for example).

Fitchburg Public Library
Investment Performance
12/31/14-12/31/15

Investment Objectives The investments comprising the Fitchburg Public Library shall be managed prudently with a primary emphasis on growth oriented securities that yield a reasonable rate of return.

Alice & Rodney Wallace Funds Stocks-66% Bonds-33% Money Market-1%

Market Value 12/31/14	Market Value 12/31/15	Percent Change	Estimated Annual Income	Annual %Income
\$ 967,229	\$ 942,571	- 2.55%	\$28,839	3.06%

Other Funds Stocks-11% Bonds-73% Money Market-16%

Market Value 12/31/14	Market Value 12/31/15	Percent Change	Estimated Annual Income	Annual %Income
\$ 748,712	\$ 716,508	- 4.30%	\$19,330	2.70%

TOTAL

\$1,715,941	\$1,659,079	- 3.31%	\$48,169	2.90%
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	12/31/2014	12/31/2015	Income Balance as of 12/31/2015
Restricted	\$312,922.53	\$314,237.13	\$ 30,308.87
Unrestricted	\$435,789.43	\$402,271.43	\$ 57,955.19
Total	\$748,711.96	\$716,508.56	\$ 88,264.06

Solicitation of Signatures for Nomination Papers and Ballot Question Petitions in Public Places

The document below was provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts concerning the solicitation of signatures at locations that include public libraries. Any such activities should be carried on in a manner not to interfere with other public business. Nomination papers signature solicitation and ballot question petitions are permitted in the Library provided there is no interference with patrons, staff, or normal library operations. Nomination papers and ballot question petitions cannot be left unattended in any public building as it could be construed as using public funds to support a candidate or question. Any person collecting signatures must speak with staff about acceptable places to sit or stand to collect signatures. Any person who interferes with staff or patrons, or creates a nuisance such that regular Library business is disrupted, shall be asked to leave the building immediately.



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Elections Division

SOLICITATION OF SIGNATURES IN PUBLIC PLACES

Both the United States and Massachusetts Constitutions protect the right to solicit signatures on nomination papers and ballot question petitions in a reasonable and unobtrusive manner in open public areas. This includes the public areas of municipal property as well as the common areas of privately owned shopping centers. Distribution of printed material in connection with signature solicitation is also protected. The right of signature solicitation (along with other free-speech activities) on municipal sidewalks, in parks and in similar open public areas is clear. Hague v. CIO, 307 U.S. 496, 515-16 (1939).

Public Areas of Privately Owned Shopping Centers:

The state Supreme Judicial Court has provided guidance specifically to those persons gathering signatures in privately owned shopping centers. Batchelder v. Allied Stores International, Inc., 388 Mass. 83, 445 N.E.2d 590 (1983). Although the Batchelder Court ruling was limited to gathering signatures on candidates' nomination papers, this standard also applies to gathering signatures on initiative and referendum petitions, under the Massachusetts Constitution. Mass. Const. amend art. 48. Shopping centers may adopt reasonable regulations that require signature gatherers to identify themselves, prevent them from harassing customers and obstructing pedestrian traffic, and allocate space and times among different groups of petitioners. It is therefore suggested that solicitors contact the management company of a privately owned shopping center to arrange for a mutually convenient time for such activity.

Municipal Property:

In Batchelder the Supreme Judicial Court held that Article 9 of the Massachusetts Constitution protects the right to solicit signatures, and to distribute related printed material, in the common areas of privately owned shopping centers, subject to reasonable regulations. At least the same amount of protection must apply on municipal property that is regularly open to the general public for municipal business. Therefore, ballot-access and nomination paper signature solicitation must be allowed on municipal property that is regularly open to the general public for municipal business, subject only to reasonable time, place and manner regulations.

Please do not hesitate to contact Michelle K. Tassinari, Legal Counsel, at 617.727.2828 or 1.800.462.VOTE for more information on the right of individuals to gather signatures in public places.

03/02

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